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Statement of purpose

Taking stock of the universe of positions and goals that constitutes Leftist politics today, we are left with the disquieting suspicion that a deep commonality underlies the apparent variety: What exists today is built upon the desiccated remains of what was once possible.

In order to make sense of the present, we find it necessary to disentangle the vast accumulation of positions on the Left and to evaluate their saliency for the possible reconstitution of emancipatory politics in the present. Doing this implies a reconsideration of what is meant by the Left.

Our task begins from what we see as the general disenchantment with the present state of progressive politics. We feel that this disenchantment cannot be cast off by sheer will, by simply "carrying on the fight," but must be addressed and itself made an object of critique. Thus we begin with what immediately confronts us.

The *Platypus Review* is motivated by its sense that the Left is disoriented. We seek to be a forum among a variety of tendencies and approaches on the Left—not out of a concern with inclusion for its own sake, but rather to provoke disagreement and to open shared goals as sites of contestation. In this way, the recriminations and accusations arising from political disputes of the past may be harnessed to the project of clarifying the object of Leftist critique.

The *Platypus Review* hopes to create and sustain a space for interrogating and clarifying positions and orientations currently represented on the Left, a space in which questions may be raised and discussions pursued that would not otherwise take place. As long as submissions exhibit a genuine commitment to this project, all kinds of content will be considered for publication.

Submission guidelines
Articles will typically range in length from 750–4,500 words, but longer pieces will be considered. Please send article submissions and inquiries about this project to editor.platypusreview@gmail.com. All submissions should conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

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About the Platypus Affiliated Society
The Platypus Affiliated Society, established in December 2006, organizes reading groups, public fora, research and journalism focused on problems and tasks inherited from the "Old" (1920s–30s), "New" (1960s–70s) and post-political (1980s–90s) Left for the possibilities of emancipatory politics today.

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The communist ideal in Hegel and Marx

An interview with David MacGregor

D. L. Jacobs

On March 6, 2022, Platypus Affiliated Society member D. L. Jacobs interviewed David MacGregor, author of The Communist Ideal in Hegel and Marx *(1984),* Hegel, Marx, and the English State *(1992), and* Hegel and Marx after the Fall of Communism *(1998). An edited transcript follows.*

D. L. Jacobs: How did you become interested in Marxism, in the Left?

David MacGregor: It was the time I was growing up, certainly the Vietnam War. I had an odd family background, in the sense that I was raised in the Communist Party. I had a lot of ideas that were Marxist-based. I was born in 1943. In high school, I happened to pick up a book of selected readings of Marx and ever since then, I've been addicted to Marx. Before that, I knew as much as you know about him by being a member of the Communist Party.

DLJ: What led you to do this study regarding Marx and Hegel, *The Communist Ideal in Hegel and Marx*?

DM: I got a master's degree in sociology and economics at Carleton University in Ottawa, and I was interested in Marxist and Keynesian economics. I wanted to know more about Marx, about why he had his ideas. I was looking at some of the key sociological thinkers as well as Marx. I kept running into the fact that Hegel was supposed to be this big influence on Marx. Of course, I read Engels on the Hegel-Marx relationship, and I was satisfied. But by the time I finished my master's degree, I wanted to know more about the origins of Marxist thought.

I attended the London School of Economics (LSE), where I wrote a thesis called "Studies in the Concept of Ideology," in which I was looking at the ideological concept, in terms of its relationship with Hegel and Marx. My original idea was to spend time with the two, but I ended up becoming fascinated by Hegel. The more I read Hegel, the more fascinated I became. I moved to Scotland for a while and I became increasingly fascinated with Hegelian ideas. My tutor was Donald Gunn McRae, who at the time, was one of the key people in sociology in England, and he should have pushed me toward knowing more about Hegel. McRae once mentioned reading Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* (1807) like a novel. So I tried it and enjoyed it. However, I kept seeing that Georg Lukács had done a novel on the *Phenomenology*, and he had argued that you can't tell the difference between the early Hegel and the early Marx. I was reading the *Phenomenology* and Lukács's *The Young Hegel* (1938), which is a terrific book.

By then, I was well-versed in Marx. I don't think there were very many people who had read much more than I had. I had a pretty good handle on him, but I had no background in Hegel or even philosophy.

One of the very first things I wrote — something that sounds crazy now — was based on looking at the sheep in the fields in Scotland and thinking about how their beauty fit into the Hegelian idea of beauty. And at the same time, I thought I better not look at the *Phenomenology* very much more, because I decided that Lukács had already done everything you needed in *The Young Hegel* and, of course, *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), which made a big impact on me.

There was also George Lichtheim's work. He wrote a terrific study of Marx and Hegel.[1]

DLJ: You end your book, *The Communist Ideal in Hegel and Marx*, with a provocative challenge of Marx's own self-understanding:

> The division commonly made between Hegel and Marx is illusory; the parallels between their theories are much more compelling than the differences. Based on the arguments in this book, there may be a large field of theoretical work and endeavour available to students of Marx. A new synthesis of Marx with Hegel might provide significant insights into diverse areas of theory and practice — insights that could transform contemporary Marxism and nourish the struggle for individual freedom and the rational state.[2]

What do you believe is most required in terms of that synthesis? And what do you think is most absent in Marx that would be required from Hegel? What might be missing in Hegel that would be required of Marx?

DM: Both Marx and Engels were impressed by Hegel, more so than other Marxists were. Marx and Engels had an extraordinary featly for him. On the other hand, they had an incorrect view of Hegel: Hegel as an idealist presenting a world that only exists in one's mind, whereas Engels and Marx were creating a historical, materialist view of the world, quite different from Hegel's.

I began to disagree with that. You can't separate the base and superstructure as Marx and Engels thought they were doing. The most important thing about Marx is that he's the best entry into Hegel, and so was Lukács. There's a richness in Marx's writings, which I don't think he would have if he didn't know Hegel. But, there isn't any base that affects the superstructure and vice versa.

DLJ: Can you elaborate on that? This comes up in your last chapter — you bring up Anthony Giddens, among others — on the usual conversation about base and superstructure: the base determining in the last instance, the superstructure, but the superstructure can act back.[3] Can you talk about both your interpretation of that and the problems you see in terms of the usual interpretation, like what that had led to politically?

There are some rich studies of base and superstructure. There were some great things done in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, looking at the base-superstructure problem. E.g., how advances in technology had an impact on society. But I really don't think that you can make that argument. It's like trying to disconnect an engineer's drawing from the building. They're the same thing, coming out of the same mind.

This is where Marx and Engels went off track. They accepted the view that Hegel was the idealist, in the vulgar sense. But Hegel was never a vulgar idealist, which would mean imagining that the world is somehow created from your thing about Marx is that he's the best entry into Hegel, and so was Lukács. There's a richness in Marx's writings, which I don't think he would have if he didn't know Hegel. But, there isn't any base that affects the superstructure and vice versa.

DLJ: In your text, you mentioned that the dialectic presupposes a rational society. Following this train of thought concerning base and superstructure, Marx and Engels are trying to think through how the dialectic becomes complicated under capitalism. E.g., Marx has the famous phrase in the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), "social being determines consciousness." He might be saying industrial social being — the industrial forces of production — are determining bourgeois social being in a crisis, in a contradiction. I.e., bourgeois social relations of labor set in motion cooperative or socialized production and large-scale industry, which goes beyond bourgeois society, but then kind of reacts back on it as a dialectic, and does he succeed? Is there any insight or is it just a wrong path?

DM: That's a difficult question. Let me talk about the idea and ideality. Ideality is the idea that we take our being and we put it into motion. The Marxist concept of the labor process is the Hegelian notion of ideality, except that Hegel takes it a lot further than Marx does. I think this is where the issues are. Marx doesn't worry about democracy or how you should organize the state. Marx spends most of his time getting rid of the state.

I was surprised to discover Hegel, when he was about 23, saying almost the same thing. Hegel and Hölderlin — the great poet Hegel worked with — had decided that between themselves, that the of my first book: Hegel gives us an entry into a whole new form of consciousness, which does not exist totally in Marx. You know, Marx and Lukács had the term of "bourgeois ideology." These are very rich writers, but I don't think they penetrated to Hegel's depth. Lukács thought he had gone to another level with *History and Class Consciousness*. But Marx, Lukács, and others remain at the level of bourgeois epoch.

What do I mean by bourgeois epoch? Kant had this notion of your mind being sensation, to begin with, the understanding, and rationality: those three. Marx remained at the level of the understanding, because he didn't understand what Hegel was doing. Hegel is taking the real, concrete social idea beyond. Society was the idea; the whole human being. It's true that the early Marx talked about the sensuous being and all the rest of it, but he didn't ever grasp what Hegel was about.

DLJ: In your text, you mentioned that the dialectic

SDS and the legacy of the New Left today

Erin Hagood

On August 26, 2022, Platypus Affiliated Society member Erin Hagood gave this article as a teach-in for the Platypus chapters of Columbia University, New School, and NYU.

STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY (SDS) was founded in 1960 as a transformation of the student wing of LID (League for Industrial Democracy). The social democratic inheritors of Walter Lipman's Intercollegiate Socialist Society, LID had banned Communists from its organization in the 1940s and had a close relationship to organized labor in America. At its UAW[1]-funded retreat in Port Huron, MI the "Port Huron Statement" was authored and the organization was refounded as the SDS.

Founded in the same year as the *New Left Review*, a British journal and inheritor of the *New Reasoner* journal of E.P. Thompson and John Seville, the SDS called in its Port Huron Statement for a "new Left" of liberals and socialists, embracing students and the campus environment rather than a party, to meet the "disturbing paradoxes" of their time.

The Port Huron Statement contains sentiments that many of us today will find familiar. For example, it bemoans that "one-percent of people own 80% of shares" in U.S. capital, it denounces the racism of America, which remains a "white country," it worries about the "military industrial complex" and the threat of global nuclear holocaust, and above all it criticizes the deadlock within mainstream American politics. The conservative Republicans and the Dixiecrat Democrats ruled the country as a uni-party. It calls for liberals to denounce the Dixiecrats and reestablish a two-party system based on participatory democracy. "Liberals" for the SDS means non-Dixiecrat, New Deal Democrats.

The Port Huron Statement has an ambivalent relationship to its historical inheritance. It celebrates the gains of the New Deal but criticizes the discrimination and liberal failures that keep black Americans from reaping its profits. It inherits some of the anti-Communism of LID, but believes that the anti-Communism of the Cold War creates a quiescent population unable to criticize the system in America.

Of its old Leftist teachers it says:

> The people who should be our friends in the enterprise of understanding rival ideologies are often of little help. The radicals, socialists, and liberals of an earlier generation—those to whom we might turn for understanding—blur their analysis of "the Russian question" with a curious rhetoric and sectarian overtone. They have fought the battles with, or against, the Communists—in labor unions, civic and welfare groups, and political campaigns. They have struggled ideologically as members or fellows of the communist movement in the United States before making their personal break. They have perhaps made their peace with the order they once fought against and find occupation with the communists to be a mask for their own timidity in the face of a new generation of radicals not ready to make the same peace with society. They are trying to "get by" in a society that would be hostile in the extreme were they to ever let down their anti-communist shield. So while the older radicals are indispensable for information and advice, and while our sympathies parallel theirs on nearly every domestic issue, they tragically coalesce with the less-informed, conservative and even reactionary forces in performing a static analysis, in making Russia a "closed question."[2]

It feels that the American workers are unrevolutionary, so it sets its sights tentatively and provisionally towards the struggle of the "negroes, the students and the third-world anti-colonialists."

In the context of a quiescent labor movement, it orients itself towards campus because the university has social influence, because it is the center of intellectual life, and because, despite its place in the American military industrial complex, it is "open to individuals of nearly any viewpoint." It hopes the students will provide the necessary energy to reconstitute the Left and to break through the "Dixiecrat-GOP coalition" that it feels runs American political life. Finally, it believes campus is a "more sensible" place than a party for liberals and socialists to discuss their political differences and look for "political synthesis."

David McReynolds, former Presidential candidate for the Socialist Party, described the SDS as a home for the politically homeless youth of the New Left. As the Communist Party cracked up (again) in the 50s, rattled by the Khrushchev Secret Speech and the 1956 Hungarian Uprising, neither the remnants of the Communist Party nor the moribund Socialist Party could act as a political home for the youth who were galvanized by the civil rights movement that was sweeping the nation and offering a criticism of the world of their parents.

The SDS immediately began to organize around the civil rights issue, putting its students in contact with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), which were already in the early 60s arguing for the separate organizing of black and white workers. The white activists should "organize their own," so the phrase went. SNCC would later vote in 1967 to expel white activists from their organization, but not just yet. Inspired by Michael Harrington's *The Other America* (1962), SDS formed the Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP), funded by the UAW, to create an interracial movement of the poor. The lack of success by ERAP was met by dissension from the rest of the SDS, who attempted to return the SDS's orientation to campus and to the students.

In 1965, President Johnson ramped up the war in Vietnam dramatically. The SDS protested the war with marches in DC. In his interview with Spencer Leonard, Carl Davidson describes joining the SDS through this march and being "revolutionized" by the SNCC "Black Power" program in 1966, spearheaded by Stokely Carmichael.[3]

Davidson helped lead the takeover of SDS by the "Prairie Power" group, which he describes as a group of anarcho-syndicalists taking up Black Power and trying to understand what it means for students:

> We tried to get rid of the social democrats in charge of the organization. Basically, we represented a younger New Left, less dominated by the old factional battles of the Left in New York. None of us had any idea who Max Shachtman was or any of those people. We saw ourselves as more in the tradition of the IWW and we were radicalized mostly because of the war. So, we threw those guys out and took over the organization. One of the first things Greg Calvert and I did was to put out the slogan "From Protest to Resistance." We had to go beyond just having protests and build a revolutionary resistance movement. Greg picked up on the word "resistance" because he had spent some time in Europe during the Algerian War. He spent some time in Tunis supporting the Algerian revolutionaries resisting the French. That was some of the core of what Prairie Power really meant. It had nothing to do with the return to old ideas of Prairie Power. We picked up on the spirit of that, but really it was a way to move SDS towards a more radical anti-imperialist position. Once we got into national offices, we had to reshape the politics, and that is what we did.[4]

In 1967 Davidson and others in the newly formed "Praxis Axis" of the SDS authored the Port Authority Statement to break with the social democratic past of the organization once and for all and turn towards revolutionary Marxism. The Praxis Axis looked towards André Gorz, Antonio Gramsci, Herbert Marcuse, French neo-Marxists and others, recovering Marx to explain "class" and develop a revolutionary "praxis" through a criticism of the New Left. Of the New Left they write:

> The new left, in its development of a partial praxis, has within itself the possibility of co-optation or absorption through the developing aspects of American capitalism; however, it also contains the seeds of a total revolutionary praxis with the potential for transforming American society from top to bottom, into a society where "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." (Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*).[5]

They look to the creation of a "New Working Class" composed of black workers, students, and women which will replace the traditional working class and, along with the "underclass" of the subaltern, renew the revolutionary energy of the class. The "Action Faction" criticized the "Praxis Axis" for focusing too much on theories and ideas and not acting. The Workers-Student Alliance, a front of the Maoist "Progressive Labor" (PL) group, was also forming a significant caucus within the SDS.

The attempt to sidestep the party debates of the Left was short lived. After the failure of the 1968 DNC protests, led by the SDS, the factional struggle within the SDS began.

Progressive Labor took the position that all nationalist movements — such as Black Power and the Vietcong — were reactionary. They criticized the SDS's protest orientation towards the Democratic Party and wanted a reorientation towards the working class. The Revolutionary Youth Movement — including Praxis Axis and Action Faction members — emphasized the revolutionary character of the Youth and Black Power. A fight over orthodoxy ensued. Everyone called his enemy a "revisionist."

Tensions rose ahead of the 1969 national convention. PL members clashed with the supporters of Black Power (which PL called "pussy power"). Bobby Rush accused the PL of deviating from the Marxist-Leninist line on the right of the national self-determination of peoples while the PL claimed they were following Lenin and Marx against Stalin's abandonment of the international working class. RYM voted to expel the PL associated Workers-Student Alliance, but this immediately unleashed faction fights within RYM.

Davidson believed RYM got caught up in action and forgot the possibilities of creating a theory of a new working class and returning to Marx. David Gilbert, in his interview with Spencer Leonard, voiced the opposite opinion: "RYM was a strategic breakthrough that accomplished what we tried and failed to do with the 'new working class' theory. RYM affirmed the youth rebellion but saw it as a bridge to involving more whites on an anti-war and anti-racist basis. Youth were rebelling because they were the least integrated into the structures of imperialism."[6]

RYM split between the Action Faction, which became the Weathermen, and the Praxis Axis who wanted to focus on building a "vanguard party" rather than pursuing terrorist actions to wake up the people in the style of the Weathermen.

This Marxist-Leninist turn on the New Left carried into the 70s and affected the entire Left. Why did the crack-up of the New Left and the failure of its strategies raise questions of the history of Marxism? Why did it prompt a return to Lenin?

Was the failure of SDS that it hadn't attempted to build a "vanguard party" and didn't have an adequate "class theory"? Was it that it had abandoned the working class?

But these questions were already posed a decade earlier at the founding of the SDS in 1960. Max Shachtman and Bayard Rustin were attempting to "realign" the existing parties through the civil rights movement, against A. Phillip Randolph's selling out of the black working class to the popular front via welfare-state defense programs, to create a party of "white and black labor" that would take advantage of the manifest crisis of the mainstream parties. And the Socialist Workers Party was in the middle of breaking up over questions of Cuba and the orientation of Trotskyism to Black Power, nearly a decade before the SDS split. In many ways, the SDS came to the party too late, after and unawares it marched onto the scene of politics blissfully ignorant of the battles its mentors — Trotskyist, Communist, Socialist, or otherwise — had been fighting since the end of WWII.

In 1956, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno discussed the creation of a new manifesto:

> **Adorno:** Shouldn't we really have to think everything out from the beginning? Write a manifesto that will do justice to the current situation. In Marx's day it could not yet be seen that the immanence of society had become total. That means, on the one hand, that one might almost need to do no more than strip off the outer shell; on the other hand, that no one really wants things to be otherwise.
>
> **Horkheimer:** We still have something of a breathing space. We must not lose sight of that in our discussion of theory. We cannot be active politically and yet every word we write is political. We have to say clearly that the Communist Party is not a whit superior to the liberal politicians in the Federal Republic. The claim that new constellations are possible has echoes of Trotsky.
>
> **Adorno:** The fact that art exists is not rendered immaterial by the statement that what really counts is revolution.
>
> **Horkheimer:** Art is actually not different from what we have in mind, but we have to articulate it.
>
> **Adorno:** We should not blind ourselves to this.
>
> **Horkheimer:** We need to make explicit matters that Picasso can remain silent about. It must become quite clear from our general position why one can be a communist and yet despise the Russians.
>
> **Adorno:** We must be against Adenauer.
>
> **Horkheimer:** But that is only true as long as we list the reasons that make it possible to keep on living in the West. An appeal for the re-establishment of a socialist party.
>
> **Adorno:** With a strictly Leninist manifesto.
>
> **Horkheimer:** Then we would be told that such a manifesto could not appear in Russia, while in the United States and Germany it would be worthless. At best, it might have some success in France and Italy. We are not calling on anyone to take action.
>
> **Adorno:** Practice is a rationally led activity; that leads ultimately back to theory. Practice is driven on to theory by its own laws.
>
> **Horkheimer:** Theory is, as it were, one of humanity's tools.
>
> **Adorno:** That means that theory and practice cannot be separated.
>
> **Horkheimer:** That is conformism.
>
> **Adorno:** For a form of behaviour to be practical I must reflect on something or other. If I have the concept of reflection, the concept of practice implicitly postulates that of theory. The two elements are truly separated from each other and inseparable at the same time.
>
> **Horkheimer:** Theory is required to reflect; it must know why.
>
> **Adorno:** What makes theory more than a mere instrument of practice is the fact that it reflects on itself, and in so doing it rescinds itself as mere theory.[7]

For Horkheimer and Adorno the crisis of the Communist Party in 1956 posed not the necessity of action but the need for theory to reflect upon itself. To write a new manifesto would be at best premature and at worst absurd, because it would be meaningless where it might have use and useless where it might have meaning. The sundered halves — theory and practice — may not simply be put back together again, but the critical distance of theory from practice must be taken as a task for the recovery of what was liquidated by history — the party.

The SDS recognized this historical condition, if perhaps accidentally and ambivalently, through its various attempts to return to Marx which ultimately tore the organization apart.

A student from CUNY Hunter College's YDSA[8] recently told me that he felt the DSA was like the 19th century German Social Democratic Party (SPD) because it was full of revisionists, anarchists, and Marxists all fighting it out. I am not so sure this is the case. If anything, the late SDS (whose co-founder Michael Harrington later founded the DSA) is the more appropriate historical rhyme. Both organizations were full of students trying to change Leftist politics. Both were founded, or revived, relatively late in the lifespan of their generation's historical experience — too little, too late — to signal not the birth but the death of a generation on the Left.[9] And perhaps both will run aground on the question of how to be a "true Marxist" — certainly the SDS veterans who now participate in DSA meetings are wary of such an outcome.

The Platypus Affiliated Society was founded in 2006 in the context of a "new-SDS" created in opposition to the Iraq War. Members of the old SDS addressed this new organization, advising them not to repeat their past mistakes and to plot a new path for themselves. Platypus took this as a signal that questions about the meaning, purpose, and goal of Marxism, socialism, communism, anarchism, and the Left could be reopened and re-examined. That part of the spirit of the SDS, however small, that sought to step back and question the world and the Left of its time was reanimated for a new generation.

But that moment feels very far from us today. The harsh invective to shut up and act is, in the context of weakness and disarray on the Left, stronger than ever. The difficult labor of working through past political failures has been suppressed for another generation. I'm told the climate doomsday clock in Union Square will be hitting zero soon, so before my time is up, I have just one question: *Why?* **|P**

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[1] United Auto Workers.

[2] Students for a Democratic Society, "Port Huron Statement Draft" (1962), available online at <http://www.sds-1960s.org/PortHuronStatement-draft.htm>.

[3] Spencer Leonard, "'Through the lens of the national liberation struggle': An interview with Carl Davidson," *Platypus Review* 117 (June 2019), available online at <https://platypus1917.org/2019/06/01/through-the-lens-of-the-national-liberation-struggle-an-interview-with-carl-davidson/>.

[4] Ibid.

[5] David Gilbert, Robert Gottlieb, and Gerry Tenney, "Prospects for the New Left, the New Working Class, and America," in "Toward a Theory of Social Change: The 'Port Authority Statement'" (1967), available online at <https://www.sds-1960s.org/PortAuthority Statement.pdf>.

[6] Spencer Leonard, "'On the side of the oppressed': An interview with David Gilbert," *Platypus Review* 117 (June 2019), available online at <https://platypus1917.org/2019/06/01/on-the-side-of-the-oppressed-an-interview-with-david-gilbert/>.

[7] Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "Towards a New Manifesto?," *New Left Review* 65 (Sept/Oct 2010): 56–58.

[8] Young Democratic Socialists of America.

[9] See Chris Cutrone, "The Millennial Left is dead," *Platypus Review* 100 (October 2017), available online at <https://platypus1917.org/2017/10/01/millennial-left-dead/>.

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"Hegel and List." I found out that they were the best of friends. And then who goes to the United States with Lafayette? Friedrich List. So who creates American political economy? Friedrich List and Hegel, and the other guys already there.

DLJ: Does list have an influence on Henry Carey? This is someone that Marx mentions.

DM: Yeah. Marx had some issues: he hated List. They knew each other well. List thought Marx was another English spy. List talked about was English secret-service money.

DLJ: You talk about Hegel having a critique of capitalism. Of course, Marx does too. Could you talk about what you see as the similarities and differences in their critique?

DM: I just articulated one of the biggest differences, and it is related to ideality: capitalism is a very idealistic system.

DLJ: So could it be changed consciously?

DM: It could become more humanistic. For example, I have often been wondering: should you have workers' control or union control? And really they're quite different. So what's that point? How do you factor those two? Marx thinks it is the capitalists versus the workers. He's wrong there. You can't tell the difference between capitalists and workers. They go back and forth.

DLJ: Marx does say — and I think you quote this — that the capitalist is a personification of capital.[18] While the capitalists consciously care about profit, they're being led by the nose about what is really the production of capital, they're being tied into this estranged dialectic of capital. That's why Marx and Engels say, in the *Manifesto*, that the workers don't produce property; they produce capital.[19] I think you also quote from the *Grundrisse* concerning the twisting and inversion.[20] Marx and Engels say, in *The Holy Family*, that the capitalist and the workers have the same form of estrangement, but one of them is at home in it.[21] They might have the same consciousness, but politically they might

have different interests. Class struggle is political struggle, as Marx puts it.

DM: Just the other day, I took all of my Marx books and put them downstairs because I planned to do nothing but the American Revolution and Hegel, but then I brought them back upstairs, because you can't separate them.

There are two important contradictions. One of them is the one I've been trying to articulate: the capitalist system is an idealist system. The capitalist system isn't as bad as we think. To a certain extent it is the human endeavor, and Marx wasn't always aware of that. I'm sure you can cite chapter and verse where Marx is saying the same thing as Hegel, but Hegel is more consistent. The other big contradiction between them is the notion of private property. Right now, in Canada, we're living in a pretty intense situation, so I don't want to say much, but there is a sense in which Marx thought that property was capitalist. That's where he was making such a big mistake. What do they say in the Declaration of Independence?

DLJ: Inalienable Rights.

DM: Inalienable rights. No property in man. These are at the core of Hegel, which Marx misses, because you can't abolish private property without abolishing the worker.

DLJ: Do you think that was the goal? The point of the proletariat is to abolish itself. It might look like that from a Bourgeois perspective. In *The German Ideology* (1846), Marx and Engels criticize Max Stirner who says that individuality is going to disappear in communism, that abolishing property will abolish the actualization of the will.[22]

DM: If that's the argument, I would say you're right.

Here is a picture I made. That's my private property. Not only that, it reflects my personality, abilities, etc. It's not some base-superstructure. It's true for all of us: we are the things that we that we own, that we manipulate and use to become ourselves. We can't ever get to abolishing private property like that. Maybe when we have nothing but poetry.

DLJ: It's the highest form of art.[23]

DM: That's right! But those are the two contradictions that, in Hegel, explain a shortcoming in Marx. Number one being that the capitalist-versus-worker ideology is wrong. They really have the same consciousness. A bunch of workers running a factory would end up running it like a capitalist would.

DLJ: Of course!

DM: One could argue that what went wrong in the Soviet Union is that they didn't have private property, i.e., inalienable rights. Those are the two key things that are different in Hegel from Marx.

DLJ: You drew a parallel between what Hegel calls the rational state. In the last two chapters of your book, you have the "External State" or Civil Society. But then you have the Rational State, and you say, this is what Marx calls communism. In his early letter to Ruge (1843), Marx notes that in attaining to socialism, it's not a new task, but the work of the Old World would become clear, rational.[24] That may be the problem that we suffer from today: the socialization of society is unconscious. It's mediated through bourgeois private property, but it goes beyond that. It seems like for Marx, to achieve the rational state would only be a next stage of overcoming. So as Marx puts it in his *1844 Manuscripts*, "we must regard it as a real advance to have at the outset gained a consciousness of the limited character as well as of the goal of this historical movement — and a consciousness which reaches out beyond it."[25] He ends that section by famously saying that communism is not the end goal of humanity, but rather the next stage. In that sense, he's expecting something beyond communism.[26] Do you think Marx differs from Hegel? Is the Rational State the end goal of humanity?

DM: Returning to your idea of the New Deal, have you ever heard of the American system? List was developing the political economy of the U.S., which is the American system. It was an advance in using capital to invest in human beings and education.

List had to escape Germany, because anybody who was trying to promote democracy or anything other than absolutism was going to jail. Hegel didn't live in a free environment in which he could say everything he wanted.

Private property, the sense of inalienable rights, goes back to democracy, which is where Marx dropped the ball. Everybody agrees that he didn't have a theory of the state. Marx and Hegel share an ideal vision. Marx wanted the ideal communist society. Hegel wants the same thing, but Hegel's notion of the ideal society is more developed and complicated.

DLJ: Marx has this idea that our vision of the future is conditioned by the present. Engels mentions later, in his "On the History of the Communist League" (1885), that he became friends with Marx because they both thought that communism was not some perfect ideal but rather an insight into the proletariat's struggle.[27] Communism was an ideology that the proletariat was producing. Capitalism is socializing things all the time. You could say it's destroying private property.[28]

DM: Marx says it in the Communist Manifesto; it's true. I'm not enthusiastic about "universal classes." They can go off in their own direction, as was discovered. I probably had a more idealistic vision of the universal class back then.

DLJ: You wrote these books during the Cold War, while there was an existing Soviet Union. How did you try to engage with that or how did that influence your insights into Hegel and Marx? Hegel has been rediscovered a billion times but so has Marx — he was being rediscovered in the 60s: Martin Nicolaus translating the *Grundrisse* into English was a big thing.

DM: I had forgotten some of the influences upon me back then and you're making me remember them. There was always an idealistic core within the Soviet Union. E.g., Victor Serge's book *The Case of Comrade Tulayev* (1948). There was a very remarkable vision. It wasn't all about Stalin. The Cold War accentuated the bright side of socialism: the vision of communism. There's a great movie right now, where the character looks at the star on the hat of a guy who is about to arrest him and put him in jail and he's looking at him and he says "that used to mean so many good things and now that means a lot of bad."

So you have this dialectic going on. It was a crazy time. Can you imagine a time when every bookstore had expensive volumes of Marx that they were selling for 75 cents? They were supplied by Moscow publishing. Now, we have to pay big money if we want to get all three volumes of Marx. Marxism has been privatized in a way it wasn't.

DLJ: Did you see your study of Hegel as responding to the Soviet Union? There were studies of Hegel that were happening during the Soviet Union.

DM: Yeah, exactly. I was trying to ignore that, because there's only so many things you can deal with at one time. There was an idealistic (in a good sense) and complex study of the Marx-Hegel relationship done by people in the Soviet Union, or by Lukács himself — a lot of exciting things going on there. It was, in a sense, the product of the Cold War.

That showed up in the way you studied Marx. My mother didn't want me to get a book by Marx, because she was afraid I'd end up in jail, which wouldn't do me any good, career-wise.

DLJ: One of the things that also shows up in the 20th century is postmodernism: the end of grand narratives. I.e., both Hegel and Marx. Something With the Millennial generation, there's been a kind of a return to Hegel as a response to postmodernism: a Neo-Hegelian moment, a "don't forget Hegel and Marx." How do you see Hegel returning in recent decades? How do you see Hegel and Marx in terms of politics today?

DM: Victor Davis Hanson is a scholar whose work I find fascinating and inspiring, but also infuriating. Hanson has written a bunch of books on war, and he talks about the ripples of war, the way war shapes culture. He notes that Socrates was involved in fighting all the time. This speaks to your question about the Cold War. How did it affect the culture? I found postmodernism to be a suffocating point of view, because you can't explain a book apart from the author. For Hegel, any person comes out of a very complex situation.

DLJ: You have this whole chapter on Hegel's reading of Plato.

DM: Or I have the much overlooked chapter on Christianity, which is important, because it's about the development of the Idea as a real thing. I can't imagine Marx writing a life of Jesus, but that's the very first thing that Hegel does. It's just a *Bildungsroman*, a story of the development of the social individual. We can always look at Jesus's life and say "something like that happened to me the other day." This is a real part of the human experience that Hegel picks up, which Marx doesn't.

One of the people that influenced me greatly was this amazing guy named H. S. Harris, who was a terrific Hegel scholar and has been important to me. He helped me get published and further my career in various ways. But I don't think he liked my second book, because I was always comparing Marx to Hegel in a bad way, whereas in my first book, I'm in the corner trying to punch away. But in the second book I'm leaning a bit more towards Hegel. I have to admit that's the way I'm going.

DLJ: Do we need Marx? Is Hegel pointing the way forward? What is there in terms of Marx and Hegel for today's volatile political situation?

DM: Yeah, it is very complex. I was just thinking about an article I wrote with a friend of mine, Paul Zarembka, about Marx and 9/11.[29] He basically looked at the economics of 9/11: who seemed to know what was going to happen in the stock market before it happened? How were airline stocks acting? Very interesting analysis. But what I was looking at was the whole thing you just mentioned, i.e., the Marxist thing in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, which is amazing. It's happening today: the class struggle, the propaganda. Part of Marx is alive in a way that I was ready to dismiss it a couple days ago, but I don't think you can do that. What Zarembka and I argue in that article is that Marx knew much more than these other intellectuals. You wouldn't be able to write what he wrote without hearing what most of us wouldn't have heard. In terms of modern politics, you can't beat that.

In terms of Hegel himself, if we could say three things that could separate Hegel and Marx: first, the capitalist and the worker really are identical. Second, private property is important. You can't just abolish it. Third, Marx never gets himself out of the Old World consciousness, whereas, Hegel does transcend it. The struggle of Europe vs. America is still going on. Wall Street and whatever they got over there in England are projecting an Old World consciousness on the rest of the world, which America is struggling with and has never been able to escape. This means that Marx will remain relevant, because Marx is an Old World thinker. Hegel gives us a way to understand it better.

DLJ: Can you say a little bit more about this Old vs New World distinction?

DM: I'm Canadian. When I go to Europe, they all think I'm American. They had me convinced that we're just a bunch of lumberjacks. But there was no way they'd ever thought that I was anything but American. So it was really hard for me to escape and of course, I resented it. When I did my PhD, I always wore a cowboy hat. I was doing the Bob Dylan thing. I didn't want to take on an English accent. I wanted to grasp this New World consciousness though I was just becoming aware of it. Canada has an advantage in a sense. We see you Americans in a way that only we are privileged to. Europeans will never be able to understand you. I don't think that they were totally in your world now and that's why I can't go to the States and pretend I'm anything else but American.

There's a New World consciousness in Hegel, and there are glimmers of it in Marx.

One of the most important figures in American history is Friedrich Schiller. If you go anywhere in the U.S., you're going to see Schiller statues. Schiller made up the American West: e.g., Pocahontas, cowboys, Indians, etc. Bad and good things — they came out of the German mind. The German consciousness was making up the American dream, and it wasn't an accident. They were sending soldiers over there. There's a New World vision here that Europeans will never get. Too bad, but that's just the way it is. Maybe there's a dialectic, and I am sure the New World has changed the world significantly. Europe is not the way it used to be, partly, because America has transformed it. But Europe will never be America. I mean, I feel like I can go 3,000 miles in Canada before I even had a pound sometimes. You can do probably the same thing in the States; not in Europe. You're running into each other before you turn the corner.

DLJ: This Old World and New World distinction- you mentioned Wall Street. Do you think this is also related to the Trump phenomena?

DM: I was afraid you might ask me about Mr. Trump.

DLJ: Platypus treated Trump very seriously.

DM: I was one of those people that really disliked Mr. Trump, like every Canadian. You had to be, in order to really have a Canadian badge; you had to hate Mr. Trump.

I was getting cancer treatment when I heard that Trump gave this speech in Ohio on the American system. Until then, I hated the guy, and then, three months into his presidency, he was speaking about the American system, which basically means, do your own work; don't send it to somebody else. Manufacture in your own country. It sounds dumb, but that's a Hegelian idea, taking in the whole vision of the human person. You know, you don't just sit there and order things on the internet. Hegel conceptualized that in a real way, and Marx occasionally says the same thing.

We think of Hegel as Western consciousness, the best thing ever. Lots of people criticize him for being Western-oriented and forgetting about Africa and all the rest, but there's a place where Hegel suddenly says there is a universal consciousness, and there's nowhere else except for in America. I've been to a lot of places, and we have something going on here that's different in the New World. That doesn't mean that we can't mess it up, but it does give us a consciousness that they don't have elsewhere. Not sure that gets us anywhere very often, but, I said to some of my friends, "Mr. Trump is just like any American politician. You can see him a thousand times in American history: a presidential, big fat guy or brash, New York guy." How could he be anything else except American? He would be impossible anywhere else, even in Canada, because we're so uptight.

DLJ: There's a rationality to it, you were saying. There's a reason.

DM: There's an American rationality to it, which is ultimately Hegelian. It brings these things together, like Elon Musk brings things together, or other certain visions of capitalism. The whole space project is kind of cool. Maybe we do need another planet to hang around on. That means that we've got to go beyond our present form of consciousness. It sounds philosophical and poetic, but it's important. **|P**

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[1] George Lichtheim, *From Marx to Hegel* (1971).

[2] David MacGregor, *The Communist Ideal in Hegel and Marx* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 259.

[3] Ibid., 247: "Giddens, for example, suggests that the 'dialectical view' assumes, reciprocal interaction of . . . ideas with the social organisation of 'earthly man' . . . the active interplay between subject and object . . . whereby the individual acts upon the world at the same time as the world acts upon him."

[4] MacGregor quotes §§206 and 208 of Hegel's "Shorter Logic," which is Part I of his *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline* (1817), comparing this to Chapter 7 of *Capital*, Vol. I, where Marx writes, "The elementary factors of the labour-process are 1, the personal activity of man, i.e., work itself, 2, the subject of that work, and 3, its instruments."

[5] MacGregor, The Communist Ideal, 240.

[6] See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Chapter IV: "'Critical Criticism' As the Tranquillity of Knowledge, Or 'Critical Criticism' As Herr Edgar," in *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism* (1845), available online at <http://hiaw.org/defcon6/works/1845/holy-family/ch04.html>.

[7] Karl Marx, Chapter 15: "Exposition of the Internal Contradictions of the Law," in *Capital*, Vol. III, available online at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1894-c3/ch15.htm>: "This process would soon bring about the collapse of capitalist production if it were not for counteracting tendencies, which have a continuous decentralising effect alongside the centripetal one."

[8] See Maxim Gorky, "Lenin Eulogy" and "Nicolai Lenin the Man" (1924), available online at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/gorky-maxim/1924/lenin-the_man.html>.

[9] Marx, Part IV: "Production of Relative Surplus Value," in *Capital*, Vol. I.

[10] See Marx, "Machinery and Modern Industry: The Factory Acts. Sanitary and Educational Clauses of the Same. Their General Extension in England," in *Capital*, Vol. I, available online at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch15.htm#S9>.

[11] Karl Marx, Part I, in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), available online at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/>.

[12] Friedrich Engels, "Single Branches of Industry," in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845), available online at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/condition-working-class/ch08.htm>.

[13] Georg Lukács, "The Standpoint of the Proletariat," in "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat," in *History and Class Consciousness* (1923): "Hegel himself distinguishes between negative and positive dialectics." Lukács's endnote here points to §16 of Hegel's *Encyclopedia*.

[14] MacGregor, Chapter 8: "Dialectic and the Rational State," in *The Communist Ideal*.

[15] See §§1794–95 of Hegel's *Science of Logic*.

[16] Karl Marx, Chapter 32: "Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation," in *Capital*, Vol. I: "capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a law of Nature, its own negation. It is the negation of negation."

[17] The second edition was published in 2014.

[18] See Marx, "The General Formula for Capital," in *Capital*, Vol. I: "it is only in so far as the appropriation of ever more and more wealth in the abstract becomes the sole motive of his operations, that he functions as a capitalist, that is, as capital personified and endowed with consciousness and a will."

[19] Marx and Engels, Part II, in *Communist Manifesto*: "But does wage-labour create any property for the labourer? Not a bit. It creates capital, i.e., that kind of property which exploits wage-labour, and which cannot increase except upon condition of begetting a new supply of wage-labour for fresh exploitation."

[20] See Karl Marx, "Notebook VII — The Chapter on Capital," in the *Grundrisse*.

[21] Marx and Engels, Chapter IV, in *The Holy Family*: "The propertied class and the class of the proletariat present the same human self-estrangement. But the former class feels at ease and strengthened in this self-estrangement, it recognises estrangement as its own power and has in it the semblance of a human existence. The latter feels annihilated in estrangement; it sees in it its own powerlessness and the reality of an inhuman existence."

[22] See Marx and Engels, "Saint Max," in *The German Ideology*.

[23] See G. W. F. Hegel, Part III, in *Lectures on Aesthetics* (1818): "As regards the third and most spiritual mode of representation of the romantic art-type, we must look for it in poetry."

[24] Karl Marx, "Letter to Arnold Ruge" (1843): "it will become plain that mankind will not begin any new work, but will consciously bring about the completion of its old work."

[25] Karl Marx, "Human Requirements and Division of Labour Under the Rule of Private Property," in *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*.

[26] Ibid.: "communism as such is not the goal of human development, the form of human society."

[27] Friedrich Engels, "On the History of the Communist League" (1885), available online at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/communist-league/1885hist.htm>: "Communism now no longer meant the concoction, by means of the imagination, of an ideal society as perfect as possible, but insight into the nature, the conditions and the consequent general aims of the struggle waged by the proletariat."

[28] See Marx and Engels, Part II: "Proletarians and Communists," in the *Communist Manifesto*: "the development of industry has to a great extent already destroyed it, and is still destroying it daily."

[29] David Macgregor, and Paul Zarembka, "Marxism, conspiracy, and 9–11," *Socialism and Democracy* 24, no. 2 (2010): 139–63.

state would disappear and be replaced by poetry. I can't imagine Marx saying that.

I go back to ideology. What you're doing is an ordinary word process. If I could pick up the *Science of Logic* (1812–16) right now, I'd point to the section on teleology.[4] It's the exact same process: the labor process. Hegel talks about it, high up in the realm of the Notion.

Where do I think Marx didn't follow Hegel? Marx didn't portray Hegel in the best way. Lately, I have been getting into how we express ourselves poetically. Marx is often poetic, beautiful. So is Hegel, despite his reputation for obscurity. But he's not that obscure. In Hegel, there's this notion that we can go beyond ordinary ways of seeing things and that we have, as human beings, access to a higher level of consciousness, certainly higher than that of animals, but also even more than that of our predecessors. The struggle of humanity is to reach that higher level of consciousness. Marx thought we had reached that higher level by becoming the proletariat: proletarian consciousness. That doesn't take us there.

DLJ: You write at the end of your book, that the dialectic would be not about class consciousness: "I argued throughout this study, however, that the dialectic method ultimately concerns the consciousness not of the class, but of the social individual or the free worker."[5] How do you see this approach to the dialectic with respect to Marx? You seem to say that Marx is sometimes the former and other times the latter. Meaning there's this question of class consciousness, but also you quote Marx's *Grundrisse* (1857–58), about the social individual developing "behind the backs" of the same individuals.

DM: Yes, the *Grundrisse* is a wonderful work by Marx, which had a huge impact on me. I can't remember the American scholar who wrote a lot of the *Grundrisse*, and had a big impact on me.

DLJ: Martin Nicolaus?

DM: Yeah. There are parts of the *Grundrisse* where Marx seems to be getting there. What happened? I'm not sure.

DLJ: In terms of why it looks like it's going in a Hegelian direction but then goes in another direction, you can think of Marx and Engels's disputes with the Young Hegelians, e.g., in *The Holy Family* (1845). When Marx is polemicizing with the Bauer brothers, they say that the problem with the workers is they don't recognize their immeasurable powers of social cooperation. Marx says in response, "They are most painfully aware of the *difference* between *being* and *thinking*, between *consciousness* and *life*. They know that property, capital, money, wage-labour and the like are no ideal figments of the brain but very practical, very objective products of their self-estrangement."[6] Capitalism always looks like it could be turning into socialism. But the transition to this wouldn't just automatically happen. This is the ground for Eduard Bernstein and the revisionist dispute. Maybe you could talk about that and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

DM: I no longer accept the proletarian revolution as the answer. I'm not even sure I did back then. There was certainly a side of me that thought we could have the proletarian revolutionary and therefore have this ideal situation or go beyond the state. Parts of the book might have been attracted to that.

By the way, *The Communist Ideal in Hegel and Marx* was not my title. My title was going to be *The Instinct of Reason*, but the publisher pointed out nobody's going to read *The Instinct of Reason*. I'm glad they chose something else. But when I saw the title, it hit me: I'm talking about the ideal. I made some mistakes in that book, or the times led me to make mistakes that I might be more critical of these days. The book came out in 1984, and things got pretty weird after that. E.g., I was more willing to give the universal class way more recognition than I would today. Now I'm afraid of what the universal class might come up with.

DLJ: By "universal class," do you mean the proletariat in power?

DM: No, I mean the government class, the intellectual class, the bureaucracy. Karl Mannheim might have called them the "free-floating intellectuals." We'd like them to be free but we know nobody is free-floating. I struggle with that in the book. I.e., the ability to put human consciousness into action, whether it's in terms of work or creativity. I have this creative urge, and I know it means to take my picture out of my mind and put it onto a canvas, or to turn a person's face into a drawing. It's a complicated process.

DLJ: In your text you draw an identity between what Hegel calls *ideality* and what Marx calls "revolutionary practice" in thesis III of his "Theses on Feuerbach" (1845).

There was a famous word that would be used in the Second and Third Internationals: they would say consciousness "lags" behind reality. It would seem that what Marx is saying, as well, is that on the one hand, there is revolutionizing practice — we know that *Communist Manifesto* (1848) line: "all that's solid melts to are, all that's holy is profaned" — but that revolutionizing practice might also be, as he puts it in *Capital*, Vol. III, decentralizing and centripetal.[7] Meaning it's also how capital is *reproduced* — what you call the dependency of wage labor. And so I was wondering again, you know, there's something similar between ideality and revolutionizing practice. But do you also think Marx is trying to say, this revolutionizing practice itself is becoming contradictory? It's kind of being stuck between an industrial society and a bourgeois society? How does that play out?

DM: That's an important identity between revolutionizing practices and ideology: they are the same concept. But they differ because Marx doesn't have an Aesthetics like Hegel did. Did he have a Philosophy of Nature? No. Marx had a definite vision into an economic universe. There's a hopeful side behind Marx. You can't help but embrace that the world is about getting better and we get better by depending on the lowest people, the workers, who are pulling society forward. I would never get away from that exciting vision.

And yet on the other hand, whether it is the worker or whether it's a noble or a capitalist, some people have a clearer insight into things than others — a higher consciousness, a higher identity. To a certain extent Lenin meant that. I know Lenin did some bad things, but if you look at what he wrote about Hegel in the library in —

DLJ: 1915.

DM: Those are some very exciting ideas. Even Lenin said he was listening to music —

DLJ: Beethoven![8]

DM: Right! I'm going into some different version of reality, something higher. There's this higher consciousness, this rationality, that Hegel is always talking about, and it means something much more than it means for Kant.

This might shock you, but it's always in my book, especially in the beginning. I'm talking about the American Vision, even in the first book. The most important thing for me in the second book, *Hegel, Marx, and the English State*, is how Marx analyzed the Factory Acts. This is one of the things that I discovered and I don't think people realized its importance. If you look at Marx on the Factory Acts, it's so important in terms of modern, sociological economic thinking. He did all the research. He did stuff that people weren't doing. He did all the references. He went into the data. I argue that a lot of *Capital* is a book about the Factory Acts. I think I'm right. That was one of the things I moved into in the second book. Now, you might be saying, what's that got to do with America? When Marx was looking at Lincoln and what was happening in the Civil War, to a certain extent they recognized that something important that was happening in the U.S. I'm not sure they ever grasped it. All those things that Americans did to make a very advanced insight into industrial society. Those things happened in the U.S. in a way that didn't happen elsewhere. There's this one important thing going on which is of a very advanced communist consciousness. Of course, Marx and Engels knew how important the Civil War was and what it meant. They, more than maybe anyone else, knew that it was a turning point in human history. They were certainly up there with Lincoln in realizing that something transformational was taking place in the U.S.

DLJ: In terms of the Factory Acts, can you talk more about that, because they play a very pivotal role in *Capital*, Vol. I, Chapter 10? But Marx's analysis also has a contradictory character. I.e., on the one hand, they are accelerating technological change, but the chapters that come right after — relative surplus-value[9] — are a contradiction developing out of the passage of the legislation. How do you see the role of Factory Acts in terms of Marx besides as you mentioned earlier, the analysis, but what he takes it to be in terms of historical development, specifically capitalist historical development?

DM: Marx took a very German consciousness with him to England. One of the things I am writing in my current book was how far ahead Germany was in terms of education and consciousness. It wasn't just by accident that German Idealism happened in Germany. They had spent two or three hundred years educating kids, developing the most amazing, advanced, and sophisticated system of education.

Marx goes to England, which is a country of the advanced world that treats its working class the worst of all. You can't compare England and America regarding the working class: they were different worlds. On the other hand, it took the Americans a long time to figure out the Factory Acts. Marx looks at the situation in England and compares it to the 300–400 years of educational development that the German Nation had experienced, which put Germany way in advance of anything that was happening in England. One of the first things you want to do is educate the children, but what are you doing if you're sending them to the factories when they are five? The U.S. based its education system on Germany's. Whenever the U.S. looks at a model, they aren't looking at England. I've been arguing this strongly: how important Germany has been for the development of the U.S., which is of course something they want to forget. We have even deep-sixed the word "Prussia."

DLJ: Marx notes that the Factory Acts are just as much a necessary product of capitalism as cotton bales and the electric telegraph.[10] I.e., it's a way of preserving the contradiction. Children are being turned into investments. It is no longer a *Bildung* (self-cultivation), as in creating self-subsistent citizens, but rather training to enter the reserve army of labor.

DM: When Hegel was going to university, he was educated to be a theologian. So there was always a kind of glass ceiling. In Germany, they weren't as industrially advanced in that part of Europe. And so you have a contradiction with a very highly educated, highly conscious people: you get Beethoven and Mozart.

Part of me wants to dislike England, but another part wants to love England, because who else developed the Factory Acts? Who tried to regulate the labor system in a real way?

DLJ: You mentioned that Hegel seemed more aware of the possibilities for organizing and adapting that the state could do with the production process, whereas you said Marx was too negative towards the state and you even mentioned the 20th century leaning in favor of Hegel. There the state continues; it grows. Now you're talking about the Factory Acts, which are state-legislated, state-executed. This raises again the famous revisionist dispute, represented by Bernstein and Rosa Luxemburg. The revisionists used to call it the "means of adaptation": Bernstein said that capitalism was creating means of adaptation to the crisis, while Luxemburg said that this was the socialization of the contradiction. Luxemburg thought that she was taking the side of Marx. Bernstein, however, was saying that Marx is wrong or at least has been rendered obsolete.

Do you see Hegel coming out ahead — that Hegel was able to see certain forms of state intervention that could overcome what Marx too hastily called problems?

DM: Just looking at the education system, I don't think Marx spent a lot of time working on that. I mean he did think the kids should be educated, but, Hegel was a high school teacher, and thus implicated in structures that Marx wasn't. Hegel has got a theory about everything. Marx recognizes that: he says we can never go as far as Hegel. And yet, Hegel is a very simple figure, which is fascinating. Hegel says everything 10 times. I'm trying to do my black belt in karate, and my sensei is always saying the same thing over and over again and I don't listen to it: "Always protect your face." Hegel says the same thing in different ways. He says it about art, the state, and language. Hegel is getting more exciting. He took philosophy to another level. Marx never got there.

DLJ: In the first line of his *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), Marx alludes to the philosophy of history: "Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce."[11] This goes back to this question of history in the sense that Marx seems to be saying that there's something that Hegel couldn't foresee- That's why he says "forgot to add." You could also have development that's regressive in a sense, which maybe wouldn't make sense in the philosophy of History where history is not time, but is rather the development of self-consciousness. But Marx seems to be developing this theory of the possibility of regression under capitalism: that capitalism could develop, but it could also be a regressive development. This question again is about the Factory Acts. It could be progress, but it could be progress in capitalism, which means that also, it could be something that's a contradictory form of progress. Do you think Marx made a wrong step there, or maybe misunderstood Hegel?

DM: There's one contradiction in Marx that affects all of *Capital*: most of the workers at the time were women and children. You don't get that impression from reading Marx — maybe once in a while. Marx writes, "workers of the world, unite," but wait: workers of the world are kids and women. Marx is acting like they are just the guys that showed up next to him, e.g., at the Communist Party meetings, in London. I'm not trying to do some vulgar feminist critique of Marx, but I am saying that to a large extent, the male working class was exploiting children. I don't know if Marx really considered this — you can read between the lines. The factory inspectors themselves knew what they knew. But the men supplied the factories with the workers and they were getting a cut of it. To an extent, there was a contradiction built right into Marx's call to "unite."

DLJ: Yeah, well because the women and children, at least the way that Marx is using them in *Capital*, are also driving the industrialization of society. It's simplifying the labor process. So on the one hand, yes, there were male workers exploiting women and children, although Engels does have this story in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845), in which a young girl kicked her parents out of the family.[12]

DM: Women were working. They began to be their own women, creating a new social individual. When people would go to the U.S., the way I figured it out, they were overcome by the kind of workers there: they read newspapers. They knew things. Maybe one or two workers in England had that grasp. Even if it was the women in the factories. They probably never had the kid problem quite as much because they didn't rely on children the way they did in England.

DLJ: I'm glad you brought up Lukács and *History and Class Consciousness*, which includes a famous passage at the end of "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat" (1923), which ends up influencing Theodor Adorno. Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* (1966) is based on what Lukacs mentions as the "negative and positive dialectics,"[13] which you take up in your book.[14] You say Marx is not just about the negative, and you quote from the *Science of Logic* concerning the critical or negative here[15] — you mention the positive side. Coming back to this question of revolutionizing practice or ideality, do you think there's a negative dialectic? Marx, in *Capital*, says that capitalism is a negation of the negation.[16] I.e., capitalists appropriate each other. There's a sell-off, a falling rate of profit. E.g., Bear Sterns is bought out in 2008. There is a kind of negation of the negation. There's this negative dialectic there, which was maybe not something Hegel really dealt with or was this other problem, and maybe this is what Marx is trying to describe.

DM: There's a whole argument about the Holocaust, for example, making Hegel's vision inappropriate or unreachable because of the negative dialectic, of the reversing of history. Certainly, Hegel talks about history as being a series of circles. It's not going straight up. Hegel was more than aware of that. Have you ever seen the film *Saving Private Ryan* (1998)? There's this scene, where there's a captain who just walks through bullets flying everywhere. Not a single bullet hits him. And, this character cannot believe it's happening. What am I saying? Hegel talks about the *ruse of reason*. He talks about things happening despite all human evil; we manage to spin around. There's something miraculous about the U.S. even existing.

DLJ: Yes.

DM: It's like George Washington loses every battle and still wins. I think I am talking about the higher realm. We human beings accomplish unbelievable things.

DLJ: Absolutely.

DM: That's not in Marx.

DLJ: Platypus did a lecture Series in 2020 on the American Revolution, which we treat seriously. We don't dismiss it as frequently happens. Can you talk about the American vision in terms of Hegel, Marx, and these Factory Acts, which you seem to suggest were a continuation of a certain American vision?

DM: Right from the beginning, in the American Revolution there is the German-influenced education. There's also, within the American experiment, this religious vision, which we don't know how to handle right now. I'm still trying to figure that one out. That's definitely a part of Hegel, although he was not a Christian thinker.

DLJ: Religion is real.

DM: Religion is talking about something that's real, including the ability of human beings to be transcendental: we can go beyond things, like defeating Hitler. We can move forward, despite these terrible obstacles. That is in Hegel, but it's not part of Marx's vision.

DLJ: Do you think Hegel would be a progressive? Or is that a violation of such a vision?

DM: In the book I'm working on now, I argue that from the start, everything that happens in America has been dictated by Hegel or by the German experiment. Who saved the American Revolution? It was the Germans at Valley Forge. Sure, there were Germans fighting against the American Revolution, but there were also a lot of Germans who were fighting for them.

DLJ: The Red 1848ers!

DM: Exactly! Or the DuPonts under Lafayette.

DLJ: Would the New Deal be part of that Hegelian vision? I'm thinking of how the Factory Acts in the U.S. play out in the 20th century, because you mentioned bouncing back from defeating Hitler. In the 20th century, there is the extension of various social welfare programs: the New Deal, the Great Society.

DM: That goes into one of the most important parts of Hegel, for whom the corporation is the workers and the capitalists working together. I don't agree when Marx says that the capitalists don't care what they make. They do care what they make. Does Elon Musk not care about what he makes? Give me a break. There's a part of capitalism that ultimately Marx didn't grasp, which is that it is idealistic. I'm thinking of that book by Leigh Phillips and Michal Rozworski, *The People's Republic of Walmart: How the World's Biggest Corporations are Laying the Foundation for Socialism* (2019). Sometimes I think, "here we are, in this socialist paradise." I'm hopeful that my book makes an impact, because I am trying to argue that the impact of Hegelian thought on America is just unbelievable. Engels and Marx were aware of that to a certain extent. You know what the difference is between them? I'm not sure if you are aware of the Friedrich List?

DLJ: Yeah, he was a German economist.

DM: In the second edition of my third book, *Hegel and Marx after the Fall of Communism*, I talk about Friedrich List, Hegel, and Marx. I remember, over 10 years ago, I thought I'd search online for

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